

March 20, 1950

Dr. Erich Seligmann
Department of Bacteriology & Serology
Beth Israel Hospital
Stuyvesant Park East
New York 3, New York

Dear Dr. Seligmann:

Thank you for the two cultures of coliform bacteria which you sent me some time ago. I hope to continue study of these organisms but so far I have not been able to observe the variation from lactose-positive to lactose-negative that you describe as occurring in vivo, and rarely in vitro. I realize, however, from your description that this will be an infrequent occurrence. Until a more positive result can be obtained it will be difficult to determine whether this variation represents a segregation or a mutation.

In my hands, both of these cultures appear to be negative or very slow on xylose, although mutations to xylose-positive do occur. Is this experience in accord with your own? I had the impression that the lactose-negative variant obtained in vivo had simultaneously acquired the capacity to ferment xylose.

Sincerely yours,

Joshua Lederberg
Assistant Prof. of Genetics

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